

CHAPTER XIII.

THE EARLY

PURITANS.

ON personal as well as national grounds Elizabeth had no choice but to establish Protestantism. She was not a very ardent Protestant at best, but to follow the lines of her predecessor and acknowledge the pope was impossible. The majority of the English people had now had enough of priestcraft under papal auspices, and, as the daughter of Ann Boleyn, Elizabeth had no reason to love the pope. She had already refused, at the peril of her life, to conform to her sister's creed, and she now, as her father had done before her, stepped into the pope's place as head of the English Church. She indeed eschewed the title of supreme head, and contented herself with that of supreme governor of the Church, but the Act of Supremacy, by which Parliament invested her with supreme ecclesiastical jurisdiction, is as explicit as that of Henry VIII. in its disavowal of the papal authority. It repealed the laws by which Mary had acknowledged that jurisdiction, and revived those of Henry, by which it had been abolished. It required the bishops and clergy, as well as all officials of the crown, not only to recognise the royal supremacy in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil, but to renounce allegiance to "all usurped and foreign power and authority, spiritual and temporal," under penalty of high treason for a third offence (Act of Supremacy, 1559). In regard to the subject of worship, Parliament, while reviving the Protestant service of King Edward, was less uncompromisingly hostile to the adherents of the old faith. It adopted the Second Prayer Book of King Edward, with sufficient modification of the phraseology referring to the celebration of the sacrament to meet the prevailing variety of theological opinion, and to this book all the clergy were bound to conform. The rubric was, however, so worded that a devout Catholic might see in the bread and